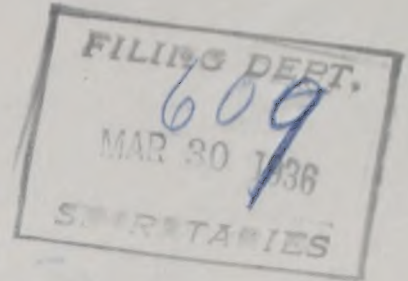


Extra

March 26, 1936
(Dict. Mar. 20)



The Rev. S. M. Cavert, D. D.,
105 East 22nd Street,
New York City.

My dear Dr. Cavert:

In accordance with the suggestion at the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Executive Committee of the Federal Council this morning I am sending a few notes regarding the admirable pamphlet on "Seven Principles of Public Worship." As I said in moving that we be authorized to publish the pamphlet, I think it is a most excellent statement and that we all ought to be grateful to Bishop Thirkield's Committee and to you for the work that has been done on it. My suggestions would be:

1. Could there not be a sentence or two with some recognition of the wide diversities of heredity and temper so that extreme positions such as those of the Quakers and ritualists would not feel that they had been wholly ignored?
2. Could there not be such a strengthened recognition of preaching as Dr. Stevenson suggested? And would it not be well to include a few sentences somewhere that would indicate that we recognize the place of distinctive Christian teaching and of the work of evangelism and apologetics which may properly be associated at one time with less and at another time with more of the element of worship? In Latin America, for example, normal worship has become such an unreality that the only way to get a hearing for the Gospel on many occasions is through what is called "conferencia sin culto," that is, conference without worship.
3. I think also that there was some force in Dr. Warnhuis' feeling that it is not well to depreciate too much the reaction of worship on the worshiper in the way of deepening penitence, of enriching experience, of strengthening purpose and of enlarging joy. Could not the last line on page 2 be stated with more dignity and restraint?
4. On the other hand would it not be well, especially in the final section, to emphasize a little more the objective value and efficacy of worship? Something ought to be said somewhere, and this would be a good place to say it, with regard to prayer as something more than a worshipful exercise. It ought also to be thought of as a cooperative act, a compliance with conditions, however inadequately understood, which make possible the supernatural action of God. The depreciation of the subjective element in worship at the bottom of page 2 would seem to be counteracted overmuch in the subjectivism of the final paragraph.
5. Would it not be well to give a little larger recognition to the place of silence and meditation in public worship?
6. And also, would it not be well to guard a little the conception of art on page 5 so as to make room for the art of simplicity found in the Friends Meeting House or the old New England Church?

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7. Would it not be wise to soften the last sentence in the first paragraph at the top of page 4? There are modern compositions, if one is to include what we have known in our own lifetimes, which are not inadequate in rhythm, dignity and force, such as much of the best English Church music. And one thinks also of some hymns written by dear old Mr. Stebbins who has just celebrated his 90th birthday.

Would it not be well to add a few words in the introduction or even in a supplementary paragraph with regard to private worship and the interactions and interrelations of private and public worship? And would it not be well to add at the close a short list of available liturgies or prayer books? Many of our denominations have their own, and yet many members of these denominations are ignorant of the helpful material available in each communion and for all communions.

Very cordially yours,

RES:AMW

Gibbon, Venerable Robert B.

A study of unitive factors in modern
American Protestantism. 1938. 56 p./

Unpublished S.T.M. Thesis, General Theo-
logical Seminary, N.C. (083.43/6871)

B61

ROCKLEDGE
LAKEVILLE, CONNECTICUT

March 10. 38

Dear Archdeacon Gibbon.

I am retired now and have no stenographic help
and cannot reply fully to your inquiries but am glad to
do so in part.

I would help you, I think, to read the report of the great
meeting of the Evangelical Alliance in New York City in 1873.
This would set forth for you as well as any book I know
the great "uniting factors in Protestantism." You would do well
to read also the reports of the Oxford and Edinburgh Conferences
of last summer.

You have no doubt intentionally omitted from your list
factors held in common by Protestant and Roman and Greek
Churches and yet some of these are the strongest uniting factors
among Protestants, either in their common form or in the ground
for emphasis in which they are held among Protestants.
Among these would be the Christian view of God, the Deity and
lordship of Christ, the authority of the Scriptures, the Christian
view of history and of nature.

The greatest unitive factors among Protestants & Catholics are:

1. Faith in the Deity of Christ and His sole authority, and the immediate relationship of the believer to Him, dependent on no intermediate institution or person. Edv

2. The consequence, belief in "the priesthood of all believers".

3. The Bible as the supreme authority in faith and practice. The Roman Catholics believe in the Bible but they do not give it the place or make it use of it common among Protestants.

4. A common temper of mind and spirit. There are chasms, and some Protestants are closer to some Catholics than others as to their own fellow Communists, but nevertheless there is a common temper of democracy and equality of spirit among Protestants.

5. A common moral and social conscience and a common sense of spiritual duty. The great humanitarianism is in the main supported by the Protestant conscience. And in the work of foreign missions the unity of purpose and spirit and even of method far surpasses as a unitive influence the "sense of weakness or" which for effect is § 6.

includes twenty photographs of the Oxford Conference

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A common belief in freedom and a trust in the
control and guidance of the Holy Spirit working in the Body
and all its members.

At the Evangelical Alliance in 1873 Dr. Charles Hodge
of Princeton made a notable address in which he said:
"As imperfection attaches to everything human in this life, the
unity of faith among believers is also imperfect. Nevertheless
it is real. It is far greater than would be inferred from
the contentions of theologians and it includes everything es-
sential to Christianity." I think, however, that Dr. Hodge
could have defined the word "believer". Perhaps he could
have been content with St. Paul's words: "Thou shalt con-
fess with thy mouth that Lord Jesus and shalt believe in Thy
heart that He has raised Him from the dead."

Very sincerely yours

Wm E. Spier